The Wittnauer Mint
Wittnauer Square, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10810

THE MEDALLIC COLLECTOR'S NEWSLETTER

Published by The Wittnauer Mint

New Rochelle, N.Y. Volume 9

Bicentennial Interest Builds With Announcement Of New Commemorative Coins

Plans for the Bicentennial celebration of the founding of the United States of America have been in progress for a number of years. Congressmen and special committees in Washington have been debating and discussing *ad infinitum*, various methods of celebrating the great event. Of special interest to numismatists has been the controversy over whether or not the U.S. Mint should issue a coin or coins commemorating the "Spirit of 1776"—in 1976, and just what events should be depicted on the coin. Many states voiced claims to having had the most important historic events on their land. All wanted priority for the first coin struck. Pennsylvania had its Liberty Bell, New York had its claim to First Capital, Massachusetts had the first patriots and the Boston Tea Party, and so on. Of course, all thirteen of the original colonies were integral parts of our country's heritage, and each one has an equal right to be honored by any coins or medallions the Mint may issue.

While the debate lumbers along, some of the states have taken matters into their own hands and have begun to issue official medallions. New York State has come out with the first.

This is a medal that anyone can own, since the price of the bronze 1½" coin is only $1. The reverse shows a swirling pennant inscribed with the words "Liberty—New York State American Revolution—Bicentennial—1776 1976" and the New York State Seal. The obverse shows a New York citizen-soldier bearing a musket, with the dates 1776 and 1976 to his right and left.

The medallion is also being issued in silver, in various sizes. The 1½" version costs $12; the 2½" size, $40. The silver medallions will be serially numbered just as are your precious Wittnauer

medallions, and can be obtained from the New York State Bicentennial Commission, 99 Washington Avenue, Albany, N.Y. 12210.

All proceeds from the sales of these medallions will go to the financing of other New York State Bicentennial programs. The medals are truly works of art, designed by Mr. Americo Giannicchi, whose submission won first prize in a statewide contest. The New York State committee deserves your support, and you can only benefit by acquiring one of these lovely coins for your collection.

Generation Gap Is Covered By Understanding Fathers Using Coin Collecting As A Bridge

In an attempt to reach our younger generation and encourage them to share our enthusiasm for history, archaeology and numismatics, the American Numismatics Association has launched a nationwide program to attract persons in the age group 11 to 20. The most successful of these campaigns was a contest for scholarships to seminars to be given this summer at Colorado Springs, Colorado. The scholarship includes round-trip air fare, room and board, and tuition for the seminar, which consists of lectures on many numismatic subjects. A wonderful vacation and learning experience for any one interested in numismatics!

This year there were 128 applicants (only three were females), and seven were chosen. These seven came from all over the country: David Poldoian, Hyannis, Mass; Deborah Martin, Lawndale, Calif.; Joseph Walsh, Cheyenne, Wyoming; Gary Gullett, Grinell, Iowa; Larry Hample, Atlanta, Ga.; Glen Parshall, Susanville, Calif. and James Zimmerman, Downey, Calif.

These youngsters may very well become the experts of the future in the field of numismatics. Their advanced ideas on the subject will surely make news in many fields, including archaeology, photography, metallurgy and history.

More Bicentennial News

Ms. Mary Brooks, Director of the U.S. Mint, recently announced a design contest for a commemorative coin to honor our country's 200th anniversary. The proposed designs would be for a dollar and a half-dollar, to be struck in 40% silver proof and in cupro-nickel proof.

The new coins will be struck at the national mints in Philadelphia, Denver and San Francisco.

The National Sculpture Society of New York City has been assigned to conduct the contest and to judge it with a jury of experts from all over the country. Criteria for entries are beauty, historical significance and inclusion of specific details which relate to the technology involved in reproducing designs on dies that will fit the currently used high-speed processes employed by the Federal mints.

Another Big California Auction

California always vies with Texas for doing everything up big! Their coin auctions continue to astound even the most unflappable collectors. The latest auction, held by the Bowers & Ruddy Collectors Association in Hollywood, sold two coins at $17,000 and $16,000 respectively. Shown here, they were the 1796 quarter, uncirculated, and a proof specimen of the $3 gold coin of 1876 (both U.S. coins).

Exonumia Still Excites Collectors

"Ex-o *what?*" The term *exonumia* denotes various types of currency that are not considered *bona fide* by serious collectors, yet are cherished for their nostalgic or historic value. Included in exonumia are wooden nickels, coupons, tokens, industrial scrip issued to employees in lieu of wages, and commemorative medals struck for special occasions such as weddings, anniversaries, company and club events, etc. Less than a decade ago, exonumia pieces were considered a "fun" thing—but now they are gaining in value. An old wooden nickel might fetch more on the market today than a gold coin!

Shown here are some examples of exonumia, which may range from tokens to industrial scrip to Confederate bank notes. If you have any, or come across any, don't treat them with scorn!

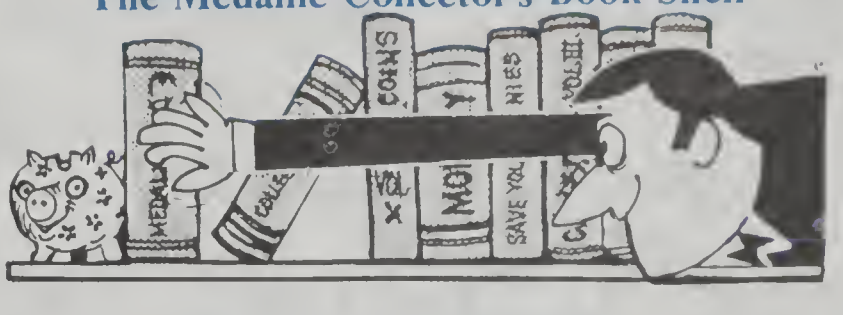
Recent "Wooden Nickel" celebrates Drug Co.

Medal honoring Arthur Godfrey for ecology work

Coin Club Commemorative Coin

Coal Mine Co. token

The Medallic Collector's Book Shelf



Reviews of Current Books, Lists of Reference Books

For subscribers who have not seen previous issues of this *Newsletter*, we again recommend all of the "Red Book" guides to coin collecting, and Charles French's most recent edition of *U.S. COINS*, published by Trident Press, New York.

For more advanced collectors, there is now available the eighth edition of *How To Order Foreign Coins*, which gives information on more than 124 countries and has 64 pages. It's been reduced from $3.50 to $2 and can be ordered from PO Box 150, Sidney, Ohio.

Anyone interested in Confederate money would be well-advised to get a catalog from Criswell's, Citra, Florida. They carry an extensive collection of references on the Civil War Period as it relates to numismatics, and all their books are reasonably priced.

New Coins From Around The World

Although the United States Mint does not issue new coins very frequently, other countries are not so reluctant. Shown here are some examples of recently minted coins.

FINLAND: Issued by the Helsinki Mint, 1972. Bronze 5 markkaa. Obverse shows icebreaker ship in upper center and the words SUOMI/FINLAND/1972 beneath. Reverse shows birds in flight, large numeral 5 and "Markkaa" beneath.

IRAQ: Issued by London Royal Mint, 1972. Pure nickel. Obverse shows three date palms with dates 1972/1922. Reverse has 250/FILS in Arabic script with the same dates below. This coin depicts the 50th anniversary of the Al Baath political party.

POLAND: Warsaw Mint issue, 1972. Silver 50 zloty. The coin commemorates Frederick Chopin. Obverse shows a bust of Chopin and the dates 1810-1849. Reverse shows the Polish eagle in center, surrounded by a legend in Polish.

PORTUGAL: Lisbon Mint issue, 1972. This coin commemorates the 400th anniversary of the publication of Luis Vaz de Camoes' epic, *Lusiadas*. The obverse shows a sculpture of Liberty, the reverse a beaded cross, and both sides bear inscriptions of the dates and names of the famous Portuguese lyricist's works.

Eisenhowers Presented With Wittnauer Mint Medallions At Our Nation's First Bicentennial Birthday Party

On April 26, 1973, Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh, Pa. was the scene of America's first Bicentennial birthday celebration. Among the festivities sponsored by the Pittsburgh Committee of '76 was a parade of flags, as well as performances by the U.S. Army Band, Chorus and Herald Trumpets. The evening's high point came with the presentation of special awards to President and Mrs. Nixon, accepted on their behalf by the President's son-in-law, David Eisenhower. Mr. Eisenhower and his wife Julie were then presented with The Wittnauer Mint's 1973 Nixon Inaugural Medal, plus Wittnauer's National Flag Collection of sterling silver medallions. Julie Eisenhower expressed her delight with the gifts in a letter dated May 8th,in which she made particular note of the inaugural medal and described the booklets accompanying the flag series as "little gems of historical interest."

Prior to the Bicentennial salute, a dinner was served in the foyer of Carnegie Music Hall, attended by the 76 members of the Pittsburgh Committee of '76 and their guests. The food was "George Washington style" and the place settings included a water tumbler depicting the Bunker Hill flag scene, a miniature Bunker Hill flag and a bronze Wittnauer Mint Bunker Hill flag medallion as a souvenir to each of the 760 guests.

Printed in U.S.A.